Security Council

Sixty-fifth year

Provisional

6309th meeting

Monday, 10 May 2010, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Salam	(Lebanon)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Du Xiaocong
	France	Mr. Bonne
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Mexico	Mr. Puente
	Nigeria	Mr. Onemola
	Russian Federation	Mr. Pankin
	Turkey	Mr. Apakan
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Quarrey
	United States of America	Ms. Anderson

Agenda

The situation in Burundi

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Tribute to the memory of His Excellency Alhaji Umaru Yar'Adua, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset of the meeting, I should like, on behalf of the members of the Security Council, to express our deepest sympathy to the Government and people of Nigeria in connection with the death of President Alhaji Umaru Yar'Adua on 5 May 2010.

May I ask the members of the Security Council to join me in observing a minute of silence to honour the memory of the deceased Nigerian President.

The members of the Security Council observed a minute of silence.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Burundi

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Burundi, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Gahutu (Burundi) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Charles Petrie, Executive Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Petrie to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mrs. Heidi Grau, speaking on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Peter Maurer, Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and Permanent Representative of Switzerland.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mrs. Grau to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on the agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear briefings by Mr. Charles Petrie and Mrs. Heidi Grau. I now give the floor to Mr. Petrie.

Mr. Petrie: It is an honour for me to brief the Council on the preparations for the forthcoming elections in Burundi in my new capacity as Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for Burundi.

This is a historic moment for Burundi, and for the region. Marking the end of its transition in 2005, Burundi held elections that led to the installation of a democratically-elected Government. Now, in 2010, Burundi is set to set an extraordinary example of political maturity. A country until recently embroiled in internal violence is hopefully on the verge of demonstrating how one democratically-elected Government cedes place to another.

Since my deployment to Burundi, while nuances of view obviously remain, all of the political and civil society interlocutors I have encountered have expressed cautious optimism for the success of the impending elections. We plan to remain closely engaged in support of the Burundian people to ensure that this cautious optimism is translated into reality.

Let me turn to the details of electoral preparedness. On 15 December 2009, the National Independent Electoral Commission set forth an ambitious electoral calendar. This entails five polls, starting with the communal elections on 21 May and followed by the presidential elections on 28 June, the legislative elections on 23 July, the senatorial elections on 28 July and the collines elections on 7 September.

In the event that a second round of presidential elections proves necessary, it could be held on 26 July.

An essential step in the electoral preparations was the issuing of some 900,000 free identity cards. In addition to these cards, the President of the Electoral Commission also authorized the use of other documentation to complete registration. Together, these steps paved the way for voter registration, which took place from 21 January to 8 February. Some 3,541,596 voters were registered at the close of the process, well above initial expectations. Provisional voter lists were thereafter issued and corrected, though not necessarily to the extent initially expected.

To date, 24 political parties have submitted the names of their candidates for the communal elections. Twelve of these parties are registered in 50 per cent of the communes, while five have registered candidates in all 129 communes. Fifteen political parties have designated presidential candidates and there are two independent candidates. The Commission plans to establish 7,000 polling stations countrywide, an increase of 700 stations compared to the 2005 elections.

The code of conduct established for political parties, the media and the administration has now been signed by almost all concerned. While it is yet to be signed by the Front pour la démocratie au Burundi and the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Nyangoma, efforts are still ongoing, with the support of Governments and organizations in the region, to encourage these parties to adhere to the principles.

Security during the electoral period is a key priority for the Government and its partners. A technical commission to coordinate all dimensions of this was established in 2009, bringing together the Ministers of Public Security, Defence, Interior and Justice. The Commission has been working on an integrated operational security plan. The draft decree was to have been endorsed by the Council of Ministers on 3 May, but the meeting was postponed. This has not stopped the relevant security structures from continuing to implement the various components of the integrated operational security plan.

On 4 May, President Pierre Nkurunziza issued a decree setting the duration of the campaign from 5 to 18 May. On the same day, the Minister of the Interior called upon all Burundians to respect the electoral code, the guidelines concerning demonstrations and the code of conduct.

Turning to the budget for the elections, I am happy to report that, through the collective efforts and contributions of the Burundi Government and its partners, the electoral budget has now been all but met. The remaining budget gap is now estimated at just over $1,700,000. The electoral cycle can begin in May while our joint efforts continue to meet that final amount. Contributors to the United Nations-managed basket fund include Belgium, Egypt, the European Union, France, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United Nations Development Programme and the Peacebuilding Fund. Belgium, China, the European Union, France, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States have also made additional bilateral contributions to these elections. For its part, I am pleased to inform the Council that the Government of Burundi has provided a total of $8.1 million towards the electoral budget, including $2 million for the security costs of the elections.

In response to the President's request, a number of international partners have committed to deploying long-term electoral observers. The European Union has already deployed its observers, and I understand that Belgium, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Uganda, the United States, the African Union, the East African Community and some international non-governmental organizations are all considering deploying observers.

Concerning direct support to the Electoral Commission, a group of international experts, supported by the United Nations, is providing technical assistance. The United Nations has, of course, played a long and important role in helping to prepare the ground for these elections, either by supporting the various mechanisms established to coordinate international assistance, conducting field monitoring missions, advocating to help Burundi narrow the electoral funding gap, providing assistance during the identity card delivery campaign, or building capacity in security, human rights, media and gender-based aspects of the electoral process.

Despite all of these positive developments to date, I would not pretend that significant challenges do not remain. I need hardly remind this Council that the elections are taking place against a backdrop of the violence and real human suffering that affected the country only a few years ago. In my view, the challenges ahead relate particularly to the tightness of

the electoral calendar and to the management of tensions that may arise on the day of elections, as results are announced, or in the resolution of any subsequent electoral disputes. We have established a United Nations task force which will closely monitor and react to any contingency needs for logistical or other support to the National Independent Electoral Commission. I am also happy to note that the Commission has provided training to political parties to sensitize them on the peaceful management of electoral results. And again, the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) is working attentively with partners to support a process for the orderly, careful and non-partisan management of any disputes.

I am happy to note that, by the start of this year, incidents of pre-electoral violence on the part of young people associated with political parties had already started to decrease. That said, isolated incidents continue to be reported. We must all watch vigilantly to ensure that, with the formal electoral campaign now under way, such violence does not re-emerge as a significant threat.

The forthcoming elections will represent the culmination of almost two decades of hard work in the cause of peace by the people of Burundi, their political leaders, the leaders of the region and the African continent, and supported by us, Burundi's friends and partners at the international level. As I have suggested, the preparations for the elections are grounds for cautious optimism. I would like to reiterate that the elections in Burundi are significant not only for the country, but also for the subregion. Many of Burundi's close and less close neighbours are also embarking upon challenging electoral cycles. We believe that successful and peaceful elections in Burundi would raise the bar and set the true standards for remarkable progress in the broader region.

But looking beyond the elections, the country will continue to face socio-economic, political and security challenges that will continue to need addressing. Continued close engagement by the wider international community will remain crucial to ensuring that the gains achieved are irreversible and that the country continues on its path of economic recovery and sustainable development. One question that the Government has already begun to discuss in very broad terms with the United Nations is what form United Nations engagement should best take after the installation of a new Government, and I look forw to continuing that conversation with the Governm with the successor administration that issues from elections, with international partners, and with Council.

Finally, I would be remiss indeed if I did not t the opportunity of this briefing to salute the tirel work of my predecessor, Mr. Youssef Mahmoud, Executive Representative of the Secretary-General, well as of Deputy Executive Representative Bin Keita, who has played such a pivotal role in the run to these elections and during the interregnum in leadership of BINUB.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I th Mr. Petrie for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mrs. Grau.

Mrs. Grau: I appreciate the fact that representative of Burundi and the Chair of the Buru configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission invited to participate when the Council discusses situation in Burundi. I have the honour to read out statement on behalf of Ambassador Peter Maurer, Chair of the country-specific meeting on Burundi, w has had to leave New York on urgent matters.

I thank Executive Representative of Secretary-General Charles Petrie for his briefing. Burundi configuration will have a meeting tomorrow hear first-hand from Mr. Petrie and to discuss situation on the eve of the elections.

Later this month, Burundi will embark on a fi stage national election cycle that will last until ea September and will renew all elected positions at levels of Government in the country. In all our conta with the Burundians, they have expressed their h and aspiration that this extended exercise in electo democracy will provide new legitimacy for th institutions and produce the comprehensive politi stability necessary to further building peace and sustainable economic future for the country.

Since the Council's most recent meeting on t item, A delegation of the Burundi configuration visi the country at the end of February. The delegation with all stakeholders, including the President, assisted in the preparation of the fourth biann review of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding Burundi, which was completed on 24 March with adoption of recommendations and conclusions.

The delegation's assessment of the overall situation was positive. We do not close our eyes to the numerous pitfalls and challenges awaiting Burundi on its way to consolidated peace, but over the course of now three visits of the Chair to the country we have seen progress. Important issues that were feared to have the potential to derail the process have been tackled. This is particularly true for the creation of an environment conducive to the holding of free, fair and peaceful elections that the configuration continuously insists on. We saw difficulty in producing means of identification for citizens willing to vote, and this difficulty has been overcome. We continue to see widespread concern about political youth groups spreading fear and intimidation among people of different political persuasions. In our meetings with the ministers concerned, we were assured of the willingness of the Government to tackle the issue.

Burundi, together with the Peacebuilding Commission has successfully worked on the financing of the elections. It has been possible to mobilize almost all the resources needed. I would like to thank all Member States and international institutions that made this possible, and to appeal to potential donors — traditional and non-traditional — to contribute to closing the remaining gap. I would also like to thank the Government of Burundi, the National Independent Electoral Commission, the political parties and the media for their role in the successful preparation of the electoral process.

Successful elections in Burundi will be key to solidifying the political foundation for peace and economic development in the country. Burundi is the first among a number of countries in the region to hold elections this year. With successful and peaceful elections, Burundi can lead by example. There should be a dividend for this particular contribution to peace. Burundi will need more investment far beyond the over $40 million used for the elections. It will need investment in the socio-economic integration of the hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons, returnees and demobilized fighters; investment in labour-intensive infrastructure and agriculture projects; and investment in the development of economic sectors that can provide jobs, livelihoods and a future for the millions of Burundians living in poverty.

Given the budgetary pressure mounting in most Member States, and among traditional donors in particular, it will be necessary to reach out to private investors willing to take a risk with Burundi.

The configuration will continue to hold an international spotlight on Burundi as it evolves in building peace. The Peacebuilding Commission should stand ready to help in building partnerships with international financial institutions, regional entities and representatives of the private sector willing to explore opportunities in Burundi. The Burundi Configuration also remains available as a political platform for all stakeholders. Finally, it remains the Configuration's task to ensure that no peacebuilding issues fall by the wayside.

This year, we have a good opportunity to reflect together with Burundi on how to further integrate international support for peacebuilding and development. We will have to renew existing frameworks. The Burundi Government, supported by the World Bank, is developing a new Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. The Security Council will decide on a new mandate for the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi. The Peacebuilding Commission will review its engagement with Burundi.

Taking the case of Sierra Leone as an example, it would be desirable to streamline and harmonize these efforts and to aim at merging the new Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper with a new Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding. It is important for essential peacebuilding issues to be identified and addressed in all three of these contexts. It might be helpful to institute a regular exchange on these matters and to start exploring possibilities at an early stage.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank Mrs. Grau for her briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Burundi.

Mr. Gahutu (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to express, on behalf of my delegation, my sincere thanks to the President of the Security Council for having organized this meeting on the situation in Burundi. Since this is the first time I have taken the floor since your accession to the presidency of the Council, Sir, I should also like to offer our best wishes for your success in discharging your duties this month. We are convinced that your experience and your human and intellectual talents will help to give a fresh impetus to the work of the Council.

At the same time, I cannot neglect to take this opportunity to pay due tribute to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Japan, for the excellent work he accomplished last month.

My delegation welcomes the presence among us of Mr. Charles Petrie, Executive Representative of the Secretary-General for Burundi. Given that this is the first time I have spoken publicly since his appointment, my delegation should like to wish him every success in his new role. We assure him of the full cooperation of the Government of Burundi in the execution of his mandate.

This meeting is timely, as only a few days have passed since the launch on 5 May of the official two-week campaign period leading up to the communal elections to be held on 21 May. The elections will be contested by between 23 of the 44 political parties officially recognized under Burundian law.

As all those present here are aware, the presidential elections will take place on 28 June. The public will decide among candidates for deputy on 23 July, while senators will be chosen one week later, on 28 July. The electoral cycle will end on 7 September 2010 with the election of councillors at the colline level.

Despite the monumental work required to organize such an electoral marathon, today we can say with confidence that the 2010 elections will take place to the satisfaction of the Burundian people and the international community alike. Several early signs and the important phases already completed point to the successful holding of these elections. Without giving an exhaustive list, I shall now mention some of the steps already taken.

The National Independent Electoral Commission has been established, as have a consensus electoral code and calendar. A voter registration operation was carried out with great success, as was a countrywide census. In contrast to those of 2005, which were held while the Forces nationales de libération was still underground, the 2010 elections will be held in a calm and peaceful military-political climate.

Plans for election security have been carefully developed and will be executed with professionalism in order to avoid any potential problem that might compromise the smooth conduct of the elections. The security measures taken by our Government, which have been operational since the beginning of the electoral campaign on 5 May, seem to be working very well. To show the importance of the security aspect of the elections, the Government has just made $2 million in additional funds available to that end. Some donors have also made contributions, for which we express great thanks.

The presence of a great number of regional and international observers is a further guarantee of the holding of free and transparent elections. The President of the Republic, through various forums, has invited observers to deploy in great numbers to supervise the correct holding of the elections so as to ensure that no one will be able to play the bad loser by resorting to false claims of electoral fraud.

Press freedom is reaching new heights. A synergy of media has already been established to cover the elections. The majority of the mass media signed a joint media action plan charter in 2010, committing themselves to pooling their resources and respecting professional principles of balance, fairness and respect for pluralism in their election coverage. A total of 15 local public and private radio stations have joined forces to cover the campaign. Journalists have fanned out throughout the country to bring the highlights of the electoral campaign to the public in four languages — Kirundi, French, English and Kiswahili. We already felt the positive effects of this approach in 2005, and its repetition this year will cement the success of this exercise, which could thus serve as an example on our continent.

An environment favourable to the successful holding of elections has been established. This environment is already real and can be seen on a daily basis, as attested by the fact that the partners are increasingly turning to dialogue as a natural habit. A number of meetings have been organized between the Ministry of the Interior, the Independent National Electoral Commission, political parties, civil society organizations and the media to provide for the discussion of various issues related to the elections.

We estimate that, in fact, pre- and post-electoral activities are just as important as the elections themselves, which will make it necessary to provide support activities before, after and during the electoral period in order to learn lessons, develop capacities and create institutional memory with a view to improving electoral processes in Burundi and establishing en exemplary democracy for our region.

The communal election campaign that began on 5 May across the country is proceeding normally and no major incidents have been reported. That augurs well for the remainder of the electoral process.

The political climate and the legal and operational frameworks for free and transparent elections already exist. With regard to financing, it should be noted that the revised total budget for the five polls comes to $30 million. A few weeks ago the basket fund deficit was $20.8 million; now, that deficit has been reduced thanks to new and additional contributions.

As I have said, the Government of Burundi has made fresh efforts and has contributed $2 million for election security costs. Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom and the United States have also made new contributions. The Peacebuilding Fund has made $3 million available, and we thank the Fund for that shot in the arm in support of the electoral process now under way. The managers of the electoral basket fund have made savings of $4 million in various areas.

Less than two weeks remain before the start of the first round of elections, set for 21 May, the budget for the electoral cycle remains in deficit. To be sure, the situation is less alarming than it was at the time of the meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission on 24 March, but it still demands due attention from our partners, to whom we urgently appeal for additional funding to make up this deficit. My Government hopes that the partners who work with us daily on the peacebuilding process in Burundi will be engines for mobilizing and disbursing the additional financial resources still necessary. We all hope that the 2010 elections will be a shared success.

Eagerness to ensure funding for the elections should not eclipse the other needs of Burundi and its people in the area of long-term development. The two campaigns for the mobilization of resources should thus take place simultaneously to create an environment conducive to the holding of free, transparent and peaceful elections. The electoral cycle under way is the longest electoral marathon in Burundi's recent history. It will last four months, and in the meantime the socio-economic engine must continue to run and must be fed with fuel. By "fuel" we mean aid for long-term development projects and future foreign investment in Burundi. In particular, I am referring to the national strategy for the socio-economic reintegration of conflict-affected populations and the priorities identified during the first conference of the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi, which should be the object of sustained attention by the international community.

I wish to conclude by thanking Burundi's regional partners, the entire international community and all those from near and far who have invested their time and energy working for the cause of peace in Burundi. My delegation assures the Council that Burundians are more determined than ever to pursue the culture of dialogue in resolving electoral conflicts before, during and after the elections. We are also firmly resolved to succeed in the challenge of holding free, transparent and peaceful elections. We did so in 2005 and promise the international community that we will do so again and make Burundi a haven of peace and an example of successful democracy on the African continent and, in particular, in our subregion.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): There are no further speakers on my list. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.